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Arts & Life

UFO art exhibit lands in Denton for Halloween

By Rebecca Hsu
Staff Writer

For nearly three weeks, James and Umut Demirguc Thurman's driveway looked more like a movie set than a suburban home piece by piece, they built a 10-foot-diameter UFO with stainless steel panels and a mirrored dome.

As part of Denton's Halloween decorations, the UFO installation now sits in Cedar Street Park, located at the intersection of Walnut Street and Cedar Street. The site features the UFO piece alongside other alien-themed decorations and is called Area 940, a nod to Denton's phone area code.

"We're just thrilled to live in a city that is so excited about Halloween," said James Thurman, creator of the installation and a professor of metalsmithing and jewelry at the university. "It's our favorite holiday [...] so now it's just really great to be able to contribute a public artwork to enhance the whole experience and see so many people enjoying it and taking pictures with it and everything like that."

James Thurman said the UFO installation was designed according to the images provided by the city, which funded the project. The city requested a classic 1950s flying saucer. The couple created the UFO based on that concept and incorporated some "Star Wars" (1977) influences, as they are both fans of the series.

"The first film I ever saw as a child in the theaters was the first 'Star Wars' movie," James Thurman said. "So that really imprinted on me, and has always been a huge inspiration and influence."

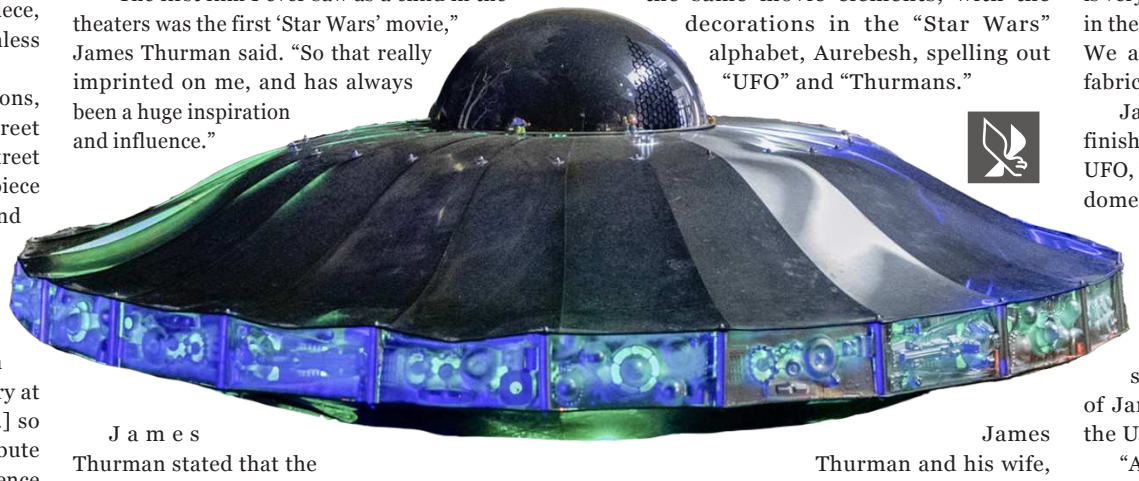

Photo by Rebecca Hsu

James Thurman stated that the saucer portion of the UFO was constructed from 52 panels, with half on top and half on the bottom. The mirrored dome was made with acrylic.

Inspired by the Millennium Falcon, a starship in the "Star Wars" movie series, the outer rim of the saucer was crafted with vacuum-formed pieces outlined using vintage "Star Wars" toys, jewelry and other materials available in their studio.

The surface of the saucer also includes the same movie elements, with the decorations in the "Star Wars" alphabet, Aurebesh, spelling out "UFO" and "Thurmans."

James Thurman and his wife, Umut Demirguc Thurman, who is also the creator of the UFO installation, are metalsmiths and jewelers who typically work on smaller pieces. Umut Demirguc Thurman said in an email to the *North Texas Daily* that the UFO installation was the largest project she has ever made, and her favorite part of the final product was the craftsmanship.

"In my metalwork and jewelry, craftsmanship is very important," Umut Demirguc Thurman said in the email. "I cannot stand poor craftsmanship. We applied the same attention to detail to fabricating this UFO."

James Thurman said his favorite part of the finished piece is seeing visitors interact with the UFO, from people taking selfies with the mirrored dome to children playing around it.

The Thurmans arrived at Area 940 on Oct. 17 during the "Meet the Artists" event, where they chatted with visitors about their work.

University metalsmithing and jewelry senior Emily Gossett, who is also a student of James Thurman, said she is impressed by the UFO piece and loves the idea of upcycling.

"As an artist, I like being able to reuse things as well, from an eco-friendly standpoint," Gossett said. "And it also kind of helps create a cohesive element to your work."

UFO continues on page 4

News

'Our democracy is being threatened,' demonstrators gather for protests

By Shehzil Imran
News Editor

At least 1,500 people attended a No Kings protest at Denton's Downtown Square on Oct. 18, which held speeches, tabling from activist groups, marches from demonstrators clockwise around the square and chanting.

The protest was held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m, with protestors staying through on and off rain, and was one of more than 2,700 protests held across the nation by the No Kings group. The movement started in June when over 2,000 No Kings demonstrations were held in the country, amassing around 5 million protestors nationwide and being one of the largest single protest days. This second round broke the previous No Kings record, with a total of around 7 million demonstrators.

According to the No Kings website, this second wave of protests continues the message of rejecting President Donald Trump's administration and "his authoritarian power grabs."

"Our country is just going through a lot right now [and] our democracy is being threatened," political science major, 22, Rylan Watts said. "Project 2025, even though Trump said he had nothing to do with it, has already been 60 percent enacted. [...] I'm just here against him and people trying to overthrow our democracy that we have built so hard over the past decades [...]."

According to the No Kings website, one of the focuses of the Trump administration is "targeting immigrant families, profiling, arresting, and detaining people without warrants." Demonstrators such as university alumna Angel Love, 22, said she attended No Kings to protest the administration's actions on immigration, abortion and women's and LGBTQ+ rights.

"I'm here protesting [for] abortion rights, immigration and really, just, I'm here for the queer community––I'm a part of it," Love said. "If I would like to have a wife or husband, I want to have my goddamn choice. [...] I don't want the f––king government to be like, 'You can't marry that person' or 'You can't get an abortion' [...] That's not right."

In response to this second wave of No Kings protests, Trump posted a video to Truth Social, generated with artificial intelligence. In the video, Trump is wearing a crown and pilots a jet that says "King Trump" to New York's Times Square. The video then shows the plane dumping a brown, clumpy liquid onto protestors.

Attendees protest around Denton's Downtown Square during the No Kings protest on Oct. 18, 2025.
Photo by Gianna Ortner-Findlay

KINGS continues on page 2

Sports

Head coach Eric Morris heads to the locker room during halftime against UTSA at DATCU Stadium on Oct. 18, 2025.
Photo by Ismael Beltran

North Texas football turns page to Charlotte

By Ian Pfaffenberger
Staff Writer

Coming off a 55-17 rout of the University of Texas at San Antonio, North Texas football hopes to avoid an upset Friday against Charlotte while practicing on a short week.

The Mean Green (6-1, 2-1 American Conference) enters the week as a 27-point favorite against the 49ers (1-6, 0-4 American). The predicted margin of victory ties for the team's largest this season with its 51-0 season opener against Lamar (6-1, 3-0 Southland Conference).

The prediction follows a dominant North Texas performance in their last appearance, where they totaled 584 yards of offense and forced three turnovers. The performance was a far cry from their 63-36 blowout loss to No. 18 South Florida, a loss that senior cornerback David Fisher said brought the team together, shifting their mentality for the next week.

"[After] the South Florida game, we had a choice to make. 'Are we going to let this game define us, or are we going to bow up?'" Fisher said. "So we texted in our athletes group chat to just stay focused. [...] Everybody bought in that Monday practice and it showed up on last Saturday."

The Mean Green's freshman tandem of redshirt quarterback Drew Mestemaker and running back Caleb Hawkins once again put on a show. Mestemaker set a career high in total touchdowns with five, and Hawkins set a career high in carries and receiving yards with 18 and 90, respectively.

FOOTBALL continues on page 7

What's Inside:

News pg.3
Denton ranks first in nation for pollinator observations

The Dose pg.5
PinkPantheress mixes it up on 'Fancy Some More?'

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Over 1,000 people gather for No Kings protest

KINGS continued from page 1

With immigration issues being one of the reasons on the website for protesting, The First United Methodist Church of Denton had an immigration justice table at the event. Molly Tampke, Denton resident and current board member of Justice for our Neighbors North Central Texas, helped table with FUMC.

Tampke said she has been "very involved" in immigration justice since Trump's first term. She and her husband would join organizations such as Team Brownsville and La Posada Providencia in going to the border and helping asylum seekers by providing them with essential items, including food and clothing.

Tampke is also a trained immigration court observer. She said in the future, she plans to attend immigration court hearings, be a witness and take notes for the American Bar Association to "make sure that immigrants are being treated legally."

"This time with this Trump administration, of course, it's all much uglier," Tampke said. "So I've been teaching a class with some friends at our First United Methodist Church about immigration and how to treat immigrants. That's our goal—to get people to treat immigrants better and leading a task force at our church where we are looking for ways to support immigrants."

Tampke was one of four guest speakers at the protest. No Kings also had speeches from Nick Stevens, business owner and former candidate for Denton City Council, Paige Dixon, United States Army veteran and state representative candidate and a member of the Denton Anti-Immigration and Customs Enforcement Coalition.

During his speech, Stevens emphasized to the audience to "look for the helpers" in the community during these times,

Over 1,000 protesters gathered at Denton's Downtown Square on Oct. 18, 2025 for the No Kings protest. **Photo by Hannah Everett**

which he said can be depressing and scary. While the No Kings website mainly addresses issues of tyranny and autocracy on a federal level with Trump, Stevens said that overall change starts at the local level.

"It's important for us to pay attention locally, because we don't have power federally, we don't have power in the state, [but] we have power here in Denton," Stevens said. "So look at what the city council's doing [...]."

Editor's note: This article has been shortened for print. Read more at ntdaily.com

'It buys us time,' Denton ISD discusses five-cent tax hike ahead of upcoming vote

By Diego Hernandez
Deputy News Editor

The Denton City Council and Denton Independent School District met on Oct. 21 to discuss Proposition A, a proposed five-cent increase to the district's maintenance and operations tax rate.

DISD officials said the measure is necessary to offset a multimillion-dollar deficit and prevent deeper cuts to staffing and student programs.

"The more property taxes we collect locally, the less the state contributes," said Jeremy Thompson, deputy superintendent and university alumnus. "Our total funding is tied to student attendance, not just enrollment."

Thompson and Superintendent Susannah O'Bara said state funding has not kept pace with inflation or mandated expenses.

According to DISD, the last major increase to the state's per-student basic allotment occurred in 2019, when it was set at $6,160. Thompson told the council that an inflation hold-even would have required roughly a $1,400 increase, but the legislature raised it by $55 this year.

Thompson said the district's finances are split into two—one for long-term debt and the other for daily operations such as teacher pay, utilities and classroom materials. Due to the state's funding formula, since the state lowers its contribution when local property values increase, higher appraisals do not always bring in additional funding for schools.

DISD's total maintenance and operations rate is $0.6769 per $100 of taxable value, the lowest in Denton County, according to data collected by the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, as noted on DISD's slides.

Nearby districts such as Keller, Lewisville and Frisco range between $0.75 and $0.81.

Prop A would raise DISD's rate to $0.7269, generating an estimated $26,914,422 in new revenue. The district's total tax rate with Prop A would be $1.2069.

A deficit budget occurs when money is spent more than it is received in revenue during a specific period. Thompson said the increase would convert the district's projected $15.2 million deficit resulting from House Bill 2 implementation for fiscal year 2026 into an $11.6 million surplus.

HB 2, passed by the Texas Legislature earlier this year, increased state funding for public schools but required districts to spend most of that money on salary raises, thereby limiting the amount that could be used to address local budget shortfalls.

Those funds would go toward restoring staff positions, maintaining smaller class sizes and rebuilding the district's fund balance, which has dropped below the state's recommended reserves.

"Everyone in my executive cabin has picked up some extra responsibilities," O'Bara said. "So any position that we've since resigned, retired, we absorbed and redistributed."

For the 2025-2026 year, DISD has reduced or absorbed approximately 144.5 personnel positions, including non-classroom staff and reading intervention specialists across the district, resulting in a savings of $8,166,055.

Without additional funding, O'Bara said the district would need to eliminate another estimated 250 positions next year to balance its budget.

"The last lever we have to pull is campus closure, and we have [...] four elementary campuses that have less than 450 students in them," O'Bara said. "They're built for about 750 people. People will say that's not

Denton ISD Superintendent Susannah Holbert O'Bara highlights details during the Denton City Council meeting at the Denton Development Services Center on Oct. 21, 2025. **Photo by Marcella Anhuci**

efficient to operate a campus at that level, but if I bought my house so that my child could walk to that school, I'd want that school to remain open."

Officials also discussed enrollment shifts and funding volatility, noting that money follows students to charter or private schools and does not fully return when they return.

"Those charter schools don't have the accommodations for special ed and some of the programs that public schools offers," said Sheryl English, Denton Board of Trustees member and realtor. "So [...] they'll come back to us and use our resources that [the state] is not fully providing us on. It's not a win-win."

Thompson said while Prop A adds five cents to the district's tax rate, most homeowners will still see a slight decrease in their total property tax bill due to higher homestead exemptions.

According to Thompson and a slideshow presented at the meeting, the district's starting teacher salary of $60,500 remains among the lowest in North Texas, behind nearby districts where pay starts above $65,000.

Even with Prop A, O'Bara said the district will face difficult decisions about what can realistically be restored. She said the measure would stabilize finances but would not immediately reverse years of reductions.

"We don't have the potential to not have a balanced budget next year," O'Bara said. "So we've got some really hard conversations to face, and quite honestly, with Prop A, we're going to have to prioritize what we've lost—that is most important to regain first [...] we can't immediately recoup everything."

Thompson said Prop A will not permanently solve the district's financial challenges, but it will allow the district to recover from short-term deficits and restore some lost programs.

"With Prop A, we get our nose back above water," Thompson said. "It buys us time to rebuild our fund balance and continue serving students while we wait for real funding reform from the state."

Denton ranks first in nation for pollinator observations

By Isabella Ferreri
Staff Writer

After a month-long competition, Denton has been named first in the nation for pollinator observations during the National Recreation and Park Association's biodiversity event, BioBlitz.

Throughout September, more than 300 volunteer pollinator observers across the city documented insects, plants, hummingbirds, bees and other species that support the local ecosystem.

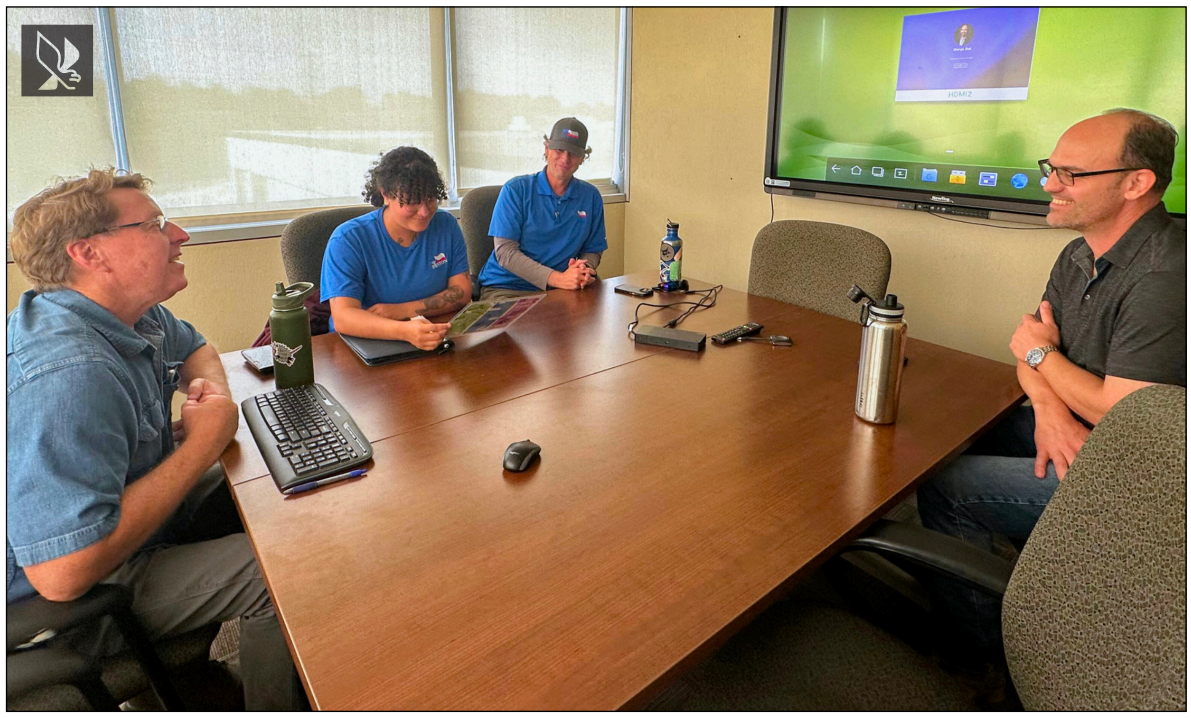
Using the iNaturalist app, participants recorded and shared their findings with naturalists across the country, contributing to a growing network of citizen scientists.

"We are in peak time for [migration], so we have birds and butterflies migrating further south from Canada all the way south into Central America and South America," said Marshall McGee, Denton resident and parks manager at Denton Parks and Recreation. "We are a funnel point for all of those migrating birds and insects [...] they can stop here, collect pollen and sustenance for the trip."

BioBlitz is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time.

Observers captured pollinators in action in multiple spots around Denton. McGee said people made observations in parks and preserves across the city, including Denton's own Cross Timbers and Backland Prairie.

One of those participants was Chione "Kiwii" Lawton, a university graduate student and seasonal employee at Denton Parks and Recreation. Lawton helped coordinate several observation events throughout the month.



Members of the Denton Parks and Recreation department discuss their previous observations during the pollinating BioBlitz on Oct. 16, 2025. **Photo by Isabella Ferreri**

"I came in with a blank sheet to figure out what we can do, and that ranged from doing little bioblitzes with UNT students to doing larger bioblitzes here at Clear Creek," Lawton said. "The Pollinator BioBlitz is a call to all park associations across the United States as a way to connect with your community and not only recognize the pollinators that are in your space but have your community learn about them too."

Lawton said several employees from the department also joined in. They also reached out to students studying ecology at the university to help them gain hands-on experience through the project.

"We also have an ecology program at UNT, where part of their curriculum is to go out and do observations," Lawton said. "In the ecology or science-related fields, they get a lot of experience through some of these organizations."

Lawton said they reached out for student volunteers to help them gain experience from these observations.

"There are BioBlitz competitions that happen from different organizations throughout, and anytime they do happen, that group of students is always gung ho to just win," Lawton said. "We were looking at the rankings and encouraging each other to get out and do more observations."

To boost engagement, Denton Parks and Recreation organized several events during the month, some of which featured giveaways donated by Keep Denton Beautiful. These activities encouraged residents to participate and learn more about local wildlife conservation.

Ziad Kharrat, Richardson resident and assistant director of Denton Parks and Recreation, praised the support they received from the community.

"I was pleasantly surprised that we ranked number one, being that this is a nationwide initiative put on by the National Recreation and Parks Association," Kharrat said. "The Denton community is already very passionate about the environment [...] there is already an existing demographic of people who are already doing observations."

Kharrat said the Denton Parks and Recreation Department is accredited through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, attained by NRPA.

"This helps us to achieve some of our long-term goals in terms of public engagement, environmental awareness and education," Kharrat said. "To be ranked number one means that we are recognized for being a city that values the environment and values community."

McGee said Denton surpassed 109 park departments across the United States, with Fort Worth finishing second in the competition. The ranking was announced on Oct. 10 in the Friday Staff Report.

"There are a lot of people here, especially in the coming generations, who have a mind for environmentalism conservation, and that excitement makes it easier to move forward to take action and do more of these projects," Lawton said. "I think this rank just highlights the fact that we are already doing that in our city, and this is a recognition of those efforts that are already being made."

Area 940 UFO installation brings interactive, friendly art to the community

UFO continued from page 1

Gossett also said she thinks this project is a successful art installation because it is approachable for everyone.

"It's not like something that people can't relate to and understand," Gossett said. "I think even the kids were [...] really appreciating it and running and jumping on it and stuff like that."

James Thurman said that the arts can take many forms and are not limited to galleries or museums.

"There [are] so many different artists and volunteers and community members that have been so creative and playful, and create artworks that we're not really sort of looking at them as much as artworks," James Thurman said. "Because it's like 'Oh, it's Halloween, and it's just a decoration or something.' But really, there's so much creativity going into so many of the different pieces that have been made."

James Thurman also said that Denton's 31 Days of Halloween helps foster a sense of community, creativity and collaboration. He said he has connected with other artists and local business owners through various meetings.

"I am just really excited to be a part of Denton's growing Halloween celebrations," Thurman said. "And we're looking forward to continuing our involvement with the city, and hope to build more fun and wild projects in the future."

Cosplayer Brad Bingham poses in front of the UFO installation dressed as a Kanamit from the series "The Twilight Zone" (1959) on Oct. 17, 2025. **Photo by Rebecca Hsu**

Things To Do:

DAPC's Nightmare on Brew Street

When: Friday, Oct. 24, at 7 p.m.
Where: Denton County Brewing Company, 200 E. McKinney St.
What: DAPC is hosting the fourth annual Nightmare on Brew Street, a Halloween market and costume contest on the opening night of Denton's Day of the Dead Festival at DCBC. Live music, spooky vendors and a huge costume contest will occur. Attendance is free.

Denton's Day of the Dead Festival

When: Friday, Oct. 24 - Sunday, Oct. 26
Where: Denton Downtown Square, 110 W. Hickory Street
What: Held outside on Hickory and Industrial St, Denton's Day of the Dead Festival features a true collaboration of the eclectic art and music community. Denton's DOD Festival, paying homage to many of fall's treasures such as cooler weather, the harvest, the celebration of Día de los Muertos and all things Halloween.

'It Came From Texas' Documentary Fundraiser

When: Sunday, Oct. 26, at 12 p.m.
Where: Rubber Gloves Rehearsal Studios, 411 E. Sycamore St.
What: Fundraiser for the upcoming documentary "It Came From Texas," a new documentary about B-movie cult classics made in Texas from the drive-in era to the straight-to-DVD era. This fundraiser film fest features three of the filmmakers who will be featured in the documentary.

University students celebrate homecoming week at Yell Like Hell dance competition

By Sophia Carbajal
Senior Arts & Life Writer

Hundreds of students gathered to watch their peers dance, stomp and yell as part of the university's homecoming celebration in the university's coliseum, the Super Pit, for two hours together.

Yell Like Hell is an annual homecoming week event hosted at the university coliseum. Every year, teams take to the stage and compete through dance. Any group is eligible, but only one winner will be selected in each of the four categories.

One of the winning teams from this year, the university's North Texas Sweethearts, performed to a mix of country songs and hip-hop beats.

"Our girls worked hard for weeks leading up to Yell Like Hell, practicing twice a week and in their spare time to ensure that they had the best performance possible," said Nia Austin, NTS vice president and biology major. "Our members had so much fun and created many memories participating, so it was the cherry on top getting to take home a trophy."

NTS was one of 12 groups that performed choreographed dances at the event on Wednesday, Oct 15. Thirteen members of NTS danced decked out in western attire, aiming to be, as Austin said, "country, but serve diva."

Most performing groups dressed in cowboy boots and hats to match this year's homecoming theme, Mean Green Round Up, which centered on country-western cowboy pop culture. Yell Like Hell made room for many students to hoot and holler like western cowboy culture in preparation for the homecoming game on Saturday, Oct 18.

All groups were observed by a panel of judges who organized the performances into four categories of small, medium, large and residence halls. Chi Tau Epsilon Dance Honor Society won in the small category, the Orientation Leaders in the medium category, NTS in the large category and Maple Hall won against the residence hall groups.

The Progressive Black Student Organization organized Yell Like Hell, and criminal justice major Alexa Richardson served as master of ceremonies during the event, entertaining the crowd between performances and announcing each upcoming group.

Richardson said she loved how each performance incorporated the Mean Green Round Up theme. Although Richardson said she was happy with the student turnout, she wishes more groups had signed up to compete, as only 12 of the 15 groups that initially signed up actually performed.

"PBSO's number one goal was engagement," Richardson said. "Of course, we expected a great turnout due to collabing with the university, but we want to continue the increased engagement following the event."

Yell Like Hell offered chances for all types of organizations, not just dance groups, to show their university spirit and express their creativity. Kinesiology major Ella Echols helped lead about 20 students in choreography from her sorority, Alpha Phi, and the Kappa Sigma fraternity.

Echols has been a dancer since she was 2 years old and said Yell Like Hell allowed her to lead others in something she loves. Echols, who is having surgery in December, said she is worried she might not have another chance to perform at her best, so she decided to go all out for the homecoming event this year.

"I'm currently a dance teacher, and so when I saw this opportunity, I was like 'yes, I'll do it,' because who knows if I'll be able to dance at the same level next fall," Echols said. "So this semester I was really like 'I'm doing it, regardless of who's teaching it,' and then I ended up being one of the coaches."

The Orientation and Transition Programs team performs at Yell Like Hell in The Super Pit on Oct. 15, 2025. **Photo by Marcella Anhuci**

Alpha Phi and Kappa Sigma began rehearsing the night before Yell Like Hell, practicing twice on Tuesday and for about an hour in the afternoon before their performance the next day. Although the group did not win, Echols said it was worth it for the group to have fun and show their school spirit.

Austin said NTS has been performing at Yell Like Hell for years. Since spirit is one of the pillars of NTS, Austin said that partaking in university spirit events is an important way for the organization to engage with the student community.

"Everyone seemed really excited to showcase their western style," Austin said. "It's such a unique way to show school spirit, and it allowed UNT students to respond more creatively."

PinkPantheress mixes it up on 'Fancy Some More?'

By Riley Morgan
Staff Writer

Since her 2021 debut mixtape, "to hell with it," British singer-producer PinkPantheress has released a steady flow of singles, albums and features. Still, none of her projects has been as ambitious as her newest remix album, "Fancy Some More?"

Acting as the companion piece to "Fancy That" (2025), her mixtape released in May, "Fancy Some More?" includes 22 remixes of the original nine tracks spread across two discs. Released on Oct. 10, disc one features collaborations with various singers, while disc two is made up of remixes from a multitude of DJs and producers.

The first two tracks of disc one are remixes of "Illegal" and feature Brazilian singer Anitta and members of the K-pop group SEVENTEEN The8, Mingyu and Vernon. While both features bring something to the table, Anitta's version is a clear winner. The main issue with SEVENTEEN's version is the production, which sounds far more compressed than other versions.

The next track, "Girl Like Me + Oklou," is a downgrade compared to the original, as PinkPantheress and Oklou struggle to blend their two distinct styles. While Oklou is not known for very high-tempo songs, the production on this remix is just too slow, even for her standards.

Illustration by Ham Bergman

On the other hand, the remix of "Tonight," featuring Jade Thirlwall of Little Mix, is a huge standout. Thirlwall perfectly matches the energy of the song, and her verse adds so much that the remix feels like the definitive version of the song.

The remix of "Stars," with Yves of LOONA, is another remix where the production is completely different from the source material, but is pulled off much better. The stripped instrumental allows the bass to shine, and Yves and PinkPanthress' voices blend nicely together.

"Noises" was an experimental song on the original PinkPanthress album, and JT brings it to another level. Her verse is explosive, but does not clash with PinkPanthress's softer vocals. It ends up being another remix where the song feels changed for the better.

One of the most surprising remixes on the album is "Nice to Know You + Sugababes," which transformed an originally forgettable track. The new production is more closely aligned with house music compared to the original and complements the Sugababes' voices perfectly.

The following three tracks are remixes of "Stateside" and feature Kylie Minogue, Bladee and Zara Larsson. While none of them reach the heights of their predecessor from the original album, which is a close-to-perfect song, they all have their own quirks that make them enjoyable to listen to. The best of the group is Larsson's remix, which features plenty of runs and fun lyrics, including references to her Swedish heritage and her experience touring with Tate McRae.

The last two tracks of disc one are remixes of "Romeo." One with Ravyn Lenae and the other with Rachel Chinouriri. Like most of the remixes on disc one, these are also a little bit of a downgrade from the original, but while the production on Lenae's version sounds clunky at times, Chinouriri's version can shine both instrumentally and vocally.

As for disc two, most of the tracks sound unrecognizable and have been remade from the ground up. Most of the remixes have a dance-inspired sound, with one notable exception.

"Noises + Mochakk" is the weakest track on the project, and looks even worse in comparison to the rest of disc two. The song's pitched-down vocals, bare production and 6 ½ minute runtime make it feel like a punishment to listen to.

Other than this, "Illegal + Nia Archives" and "Romeo + KILIMANJARO" are the true standouts of disc two, with the former being one of the best dance songs of the year, blowing the original out of the water with the addition of its standout features.

"Fancy Some More?" was not made to be listened to as a complete project. However, it is still able to hold its own and avoid becoming boring or repetitive. Most of the tracks are not able to reach the heights of "Fancy That," but are still a good time.

Riley's rating: 3.5/5

Icon of the Week:

Sam Rivers

Credit **Achim Raschka**

This week's icon is the late Sam Rivers, the bassist for prolific nu metal band Limp Bizkit.

Rivers was born on Sept. 2, 1977, in Jacksonville, Florida. In middle school, his musical career started with him enrolling in his school's band, apparently inspired by Limp Bizkit's future drummer John Otto, who was enrolled in a jazz program at the time.

He continued to develop his musical prowess in high school, working with the district's band program. At the time, his band teacher recommended that he switch from guitar to bass.

Rivers met Limp Bizkit frontman Fred Durst while working at Chick-fil-A in a mall in Jacksonville. They quickly became friends, bonding over their shared interests in music. This led them to host a jam session eventually.

These jam sessions would lead to the creation of Limp Bizkit, an award-winning band with three Grammy Award nominations.

Tame Impala's latest album 'Deadbeat' mistakes repetition for reinvention

By Thomas Trevino
Staff Writer

In an era where genuine creativity in music can feel increasingly scarce, Tame Impala's newest album represents a disappointing regression rather than an evolution. "Deadbeat" (2025) lacks the emotional resonance and inventiveness that defined Tame Impala.

The record opens with "My Old Ways," a track featuring a repetitive piano chord progression that overstays its welcome before transitioning into a disco-house groove that sounds tailor-made for a modern Apple commercial — a corporate safe sound that is a recurring theme throughout the project.

The album does contain some redeeming qualities, though. The production in the first half of the second track, "No Reply," for example, is genuinely engaging and exciting, but ultimately fails to justify its runtime by playing it too safe. Once again, fading into that recurring soulless theme.

"Dracula," one of the album's singles, released on Sept. 24, 2025, exemplifies a broader problem. It is catchy and fun in the moment, but lacks depth or staying power. Similarly, "Loser" shows potential but suffers from a lack of dynamic range, falling short with its plain, basic-sounding lyrics that leave much to be desired.

The fifth track, "Oblivion," is the epitome of Tame Impala's new sound. With uninspired production and no discernible hook, it feels like a filler track in a sea of similar songs. By this point, the songs begin to blur together, and while "Not My World" does not break that pattern, its well-executed production gives it at least a little degree of polish — even if it is the same sound looping for four minutes.

"Piece of Heaven" struggles to justify its existence. Music does not always need to carry deep meaning, but when it lacks even basic quality, the lack of purpose becomes difficult to ignore. The genre of dance music itself is repetitive, but this project is a novice attempt at capturing its surface-level sound.

"Obsolete" marks a modest turning point — the first track that successfully lands its dance-house ambitions. It is both listenable and cohesive, finally delivering the original promise.

Kevin Parker told Zane Lowe in a podcast that he considered making a techno album and releasing it anonymously, and based on "Ethereal Connection," he believed he could pull it off. The track is one of the few that feels fully realized, evoking the atmospheric pulse of the Buckshot Roulette (2024) soundtrack.

Unfortunately, "See You On Monday (You're Lost)" brings the album right back down, weighed by uninspired production and a lack of direction. "Afterthought," on the other hand, injects some much-needed energy, channeling influences from house music and the upbeat rhythm of Jungle's "Back on 74" (2023). It is one of the more successful moments on the record.

The album's closing track, "End Of Summer," has great industrial, club-like instrumentals. Granted, the song would not be great as a standalone track, and it would have little to no substance without the album backing it as a whole.

Tame Impala's latest effort struggles to find its footing between experimentation and accessibility. While flashes of creativity appear in isolated moments, much of the album feels formulaic, safe and more like a product of algorithmic design than artistic intent.

For an artist once celebrated for pushing boundaries, especially with albums that achieved cult classic status, such as "Currents" (2015), this release feels like an uninspired echo of past brilliance rather than a bold new direction.

Thomas' rating: 1/5

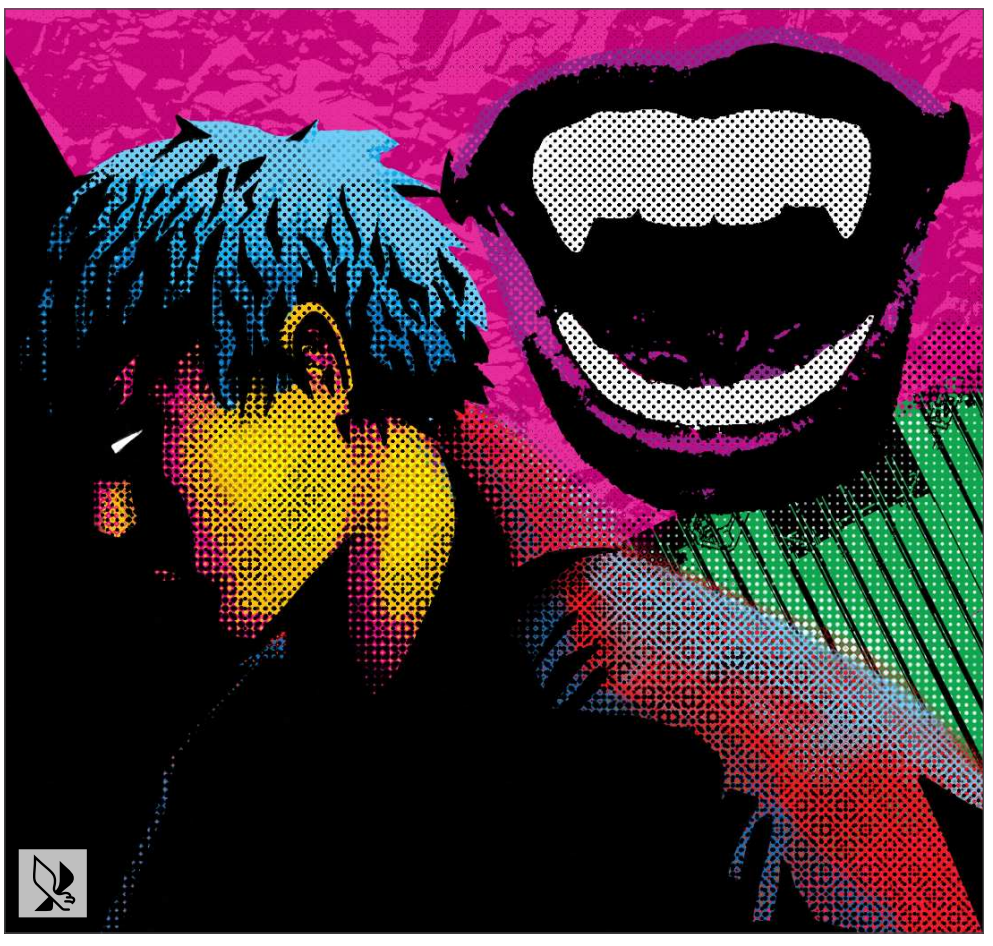


Illustration by Finn Collins

HOMECOMING 2025

Photos by Katie Brackens, Marcella Anhuci, Ismael Beltran and Aiden Gonzalez

North Texas football travels for first road game since Week 4

FOOTBALL continued from page 1

Hawkins also paced North Texas in rushing yards, yards after catch and receptions en route to another standout performance. Currently, he ranks first in rushing yards and second in rushing touchdowns among all freshmen running backs.

"It wasn't on my bingo card that our true freshman running back would be in the position he is right now and continue to earn the reps and the carries and the different roles that he has in this offense," head coach Eric Morris said.

The Mean Green ended its 21-game streak of eight players or more with a reception in a game against the Roadrunners. Instead, sophomore wide receiver Wyatt Young took the majority of the workload amid an injury to sophomore wide receiver Miles Coleman, hauling in 102 yards to pair with three touchdowns.

Following the performances from Mestemaker, Hawkins and Young, the trio helped propel North Texas into the No. 1 scoring offense in the country at 45 points per game.

"I think our preparation in practice has been very key," senior wide receiver Cameron Dorner said. "Us being on the same page as the quarterback, especially in the receiving room, it's very important going out there."

A dull spot for the Mean Green against UTSA was its rushing defense. The Roadrunners recorded 214 rushing yards on 6.7 yards per carry as senior running back Robert Henry Jr. ran wild for 138 rushing yards, including a 72-yard explosive run on the first play.

The team's run-stopping woes also date back two games, when South Florida ran for 306 rushing yards and four rushing touchdowns. Morris said he believes the key for the unit to recuperate is limiting chunk plays from opposing running backs.

"We got to do a good job of limiting explosives [...]," Morris said. "Going back and starting that film and the way we were able to play consistently down the stretch, I was so proud of the way our kids responded."

Sophomore wide receiver Miles Coleman celebrates with teammates after his touchdown against South Florida at DATCU Stadium on Oct. 10, 2025. **Photo by Ismael Beltran**

Meanwhile, Charlotte has struggled to garner any momentum this season, sitting last in the American amid a four-game losing streak. The 49ers rank last in scoring offense in the conference, 12th in scoring defense and fail to rank any players among the leaders for rushing and passing totals.

Despite all of this, the Mean Green matchup against a downtrodden Charlotte does not come on a silver platter. The game is set for Friday, Oct. 24, leaving one less day of preparation from the team's typical week.

Additionally, North Texas has not played on the road since its 45-38 overtime win against Army on Sept. 20.

"The week goes by quicker, travel is quicker," Dorner said. "So I think just focusing on this week, getting our bodies right and doing the proper things to get rest, stay healthy for this next week and focus on Charlotte."

The short week also comes with a share of off-the-field news, as the university's Board of Regents voted to allow the athletic department to negotiate to amend and extend Morris' contract. No deal has been made as of writing, but Morris said he will let his agent handle negotiations while he focuses on the remainder of the season.

"Nothing is more important than us beating Charlotte right now," Morris said.

Athlete of the Week:

Malisone Chanthapanya

Credit **Mean Green Sports**

Graduate senior golfer Malisone Chanthapanya set a new program single-round 18-hole record with an 8-under-par 64 at the Jim West Challenge in San Marcos on Oct. 20. Her final score of 9-under-par 207 over two days allowed Chanthapanya to finish as the tournament's runner-up. The Mean Green finished in seventh place at the challenge in a field of 14 teams. Chanthapanya returned to North Texas for a fifth season after finishing her first year with the Mean Green as a member of the 2024 American Athletic Conference All-Conference Team. In her other notable appearances this season, Chanthapanya placed 35th at the season-opening Sam Golden Collegiate Invitational on Sept. 8-9 to help North Texas reach second place out of 13 teams.

At a Glance:

Swim & Dive

North Texas swim and dive has begun its season 2-1 in dual meets with two wins over Oklahoma Christian and the University of the Incarnate Word on Oct. 3. The team also suffered a loss once to Southern Methodist University third out of sixth. The team's next competition is Oct. 25 against American Conference opponent Tulane at their home pool in the Pohl Recreation Center & PEB Natatorium. The match will start at 10 a.m. for the swimming team and 11 a.m. for the diving team. The Green Wave has begun with a rockier 3-4 record this year, but finished third of six last season in the American Women's Swimming and Diving Championship.

Softball

The Mean Green softball team has two remaining games on its fall schedule, both home at Lovelace Stadium, beginning with a match against Tyler Junior College on Friday, Oct. 24. Their next match will be on Oct. 29 against Grayson College. North Texas has 11 new players heading into the first year under head coach Cody White and will pick up again in the spring after the team's fall schedule concludes.

Tennis

North Texas tennis takes on the American Championship in Tulsa, Oklahoma, from Oct. 23-26. The team will have one more game in its fall schedule against the University of Tulsa on Oct. 31-Nov. 2. The fall conference championship will solely be singles play, as has been the entirety of the fall singles season. Doubles play will pick back up in the spring.

North Texas men's club soccer invites diverse roster

By Carson Kelly
Staff Writer

Toward the back of the Eagle Point Intramural Field is a multicultural melting pot of backgrounds converging in the heart of Texas: American football. But this group plays a different sport under one banner as the North Texas men's club soccer team.

The team participates in the Texas Collegiate Soccer league, a multi-state league that consists of teams from the University of Texas, University of Oklahoma and others. There, they have secured wins over the likes of Oklahoma State, Abilene Christian and Louisiana Tech.

During its existence, the club has been home to players from a variety of regions, including Africa, Europe, Central America and South America. Multiple players are bilingual and have a background unique from the person they play next to. Despite those differences, they have become a tight-knit group.

"As a team, it's all family," senior and club treasurer Khalid Khalfan said. "We have people from a different country out here, people that speak different languages, but when we come to practice, we are all one family. In games, we are all one family."

Growing up in London, England, Khalfan primarily played rugby, but was surrounded by the sport he now adores. When Khalfan arrived at North Texas, he said he decided to start playing soccer for the club to stay in shape. Having been at the university for a couple of years, he has seen the changes the club has experienced, including the arrival of the junior club president Diego Contreras.

"I think my third year, Diego and the guys started taking over, and that's when everything started improving and got way better," Khalfan said.

Contreras took over as president of the team two years ago as a freshman. Born in Houston, he said the combination of watching his older brother play soccer and his upbringing helped foster a passion of the sport that he still has today.

"I mean, I [was] just surrounded by it, and then falling in love with the immersion of that, and where I lived was honestly what got me to play it," Contreras said.

The firsthand perspective of seeing varied approaches to the same sport led Contreras to the opinion that multiple cultures support soccer, regardless of style, just like the club.

"I've seen a bit of both worlds, Central and South America, and seeing how they bring the soccer attitude to where they are," Contreras said. "I think it's two different cultures, but kind of multiplied together and added together, it brings a massive increase in attitude and attention towards the sport."

Since taking over the club, Contreras has overseen the team's rapid growth. He said there are now 38 players on the roster, and before the semester started, a record number of tryouts was held, with over 100 participants.

Additionally the club won Sport Club of the Year at North Texas last season. One of the main issues hindering the team has been a lack of funding. Like other established programs throughout the university, the men's soccer club receives money from the university, as well as through outside sponsorships. However, Contreras said they get around $3,000 to $4,000 a semester from the university.

The North Texas men's club soccer team practice at the Eagle Point Intramural Field on Oct. 20, 2025. **Photo by Jadelle Miralles**

"It was very difficult to bring awareness, kind of organize things together," assistant coach Bradford Love said. "Just overall, the funding and all that really wasn't there."

The club's growth mirrors an overall growing popularity of the sport, not just in North Texas, but throughout the whole country. In the summer of 2026, the grandest stage in the entire sport will come to North America, with the World Cup playing games all over the continent, including some hosted in Arlington.

"The popularity of the sport itself at the professional level also fosters a good popularity at the lower levels," Love said.

North Texas has the potential to be a home base for a couple of the participating nations. With the event comes a spotlight that has the potential to grow the sport in Denton further.

"The U.S. as a country never really has soccer as a priority like as a sport," said Jin Choi, senior and team social media manager. "For the World Cup to come to America, it's a really big opportunity for us to shine."

The club will deal with drastic changes when the team's current seniors, who are currently managing the club, graduate. When the moment comes, Contreras will have to hand the reins over to another person, marking a full circle for him when he was given control two years ago from his predecessors.

"It's something I've been thinking about a lot, because I am going to have to give this club to someone else after this year," Contreras said. "I'm looking for a new leader. I'm looking for someone who has the same [...] ferocity when it comes to the sport and the club as a whole."

Defunding journalism will have consequences on news production and democracy

By Kyson Barber
Staff Writer

The stripping of already allocated funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a nonpartisan private entity that disperses public broadcasting funds to local radio and television productions, deals significant damage to local newsrooms and broadcast stations.

Major funding cuts took effect on Oct. 1, leading to significant budget changes in local newsrooms. The defunding of public broadcasting will lead to the demise of local newsrooms and a lack of accountability in local governments. These cuts include a decrease in funding allocated to National Public Radio, Public Broadcasting Service and their local member stations.

Public broadcasting is funded through several different avenues, like donations, grants and federal funding through the CPB. The CPB receives a specific amount each year from the federal government — $535 million, as provided in 2025 — that is then distributed to local newsrooms and broadcasters. This funding makes up, on average, 15 percent of the funding local broadcast stations receive.

CPB then appropriates this money to 1,523 local news stations. These stations, especially in rural areas, rely heavily on this funding, as many have struggled to stay afloat since the COVID-19 pandemic, with private equity firms buying and shuttering newsrooms.

Following the 2020 pandemic, local publications struggled to recover and lacked the funding to operate at full capacity. Many of these local publications have transitioned to digital-only formats, resulting in staff reductions or closures.

Larger networks, such as NPR and PBS, do not receive a substantial amount of funding from the CPB. The way NPR and PBS receive those public funds, which are approximately one percent and 15 percent of their budgets, respectively, is through member stations paying to run national programs on their broadcast stations. The cut in funding does hurt NPR and PBS, but they will still largely be able to operate.

Defunding the CPB is another step toward shuttering local journalism and causing harm to local communities, with the cuts hurting small and rural towns the most.

These local newsrooms provide an essential service to the communities they serve. Without local journalism, corruption in small governments can flourish due to a lack of accountability.

Texas is heavily impacted by the lack of local journalism, partly due to the oversaturation of journalists in the state's larger cities like Austin and Dallas, leading to fewer reporters in small newsrooms.

The strong support for public media is also what sustains a strong democracy. According to a study done at the University of Pennsylvania, funding toward public media – as long as it is independent – strengthens democracies.

With local newsrooms more present in communities, participation in democratic processes and civic knowledge increases. These benefits are evident in other nations such as Norway and Sweden, where significantly more funding is allocated to public media, according to the University of Pennsylvania.

In America, the funding toward the CPB costs the average taxpayer $1.60 per year. This small figure is dwarfed in comparison to the fees of other public broadcasting services, such as those in Britain or Switzerland, where the public funding is $95 and $191, respectively.

The benefits to democracy strongly outweigh the minute costs associated with funding local newsrooms. Local journalism needs to be supported for democracy in America to survive and thrive.

Newsrooms across the country have had to tighten their financial belts for the past decade, with fewer and fewer opportunities for aspiring journalists to secure a spot in newsrooms.

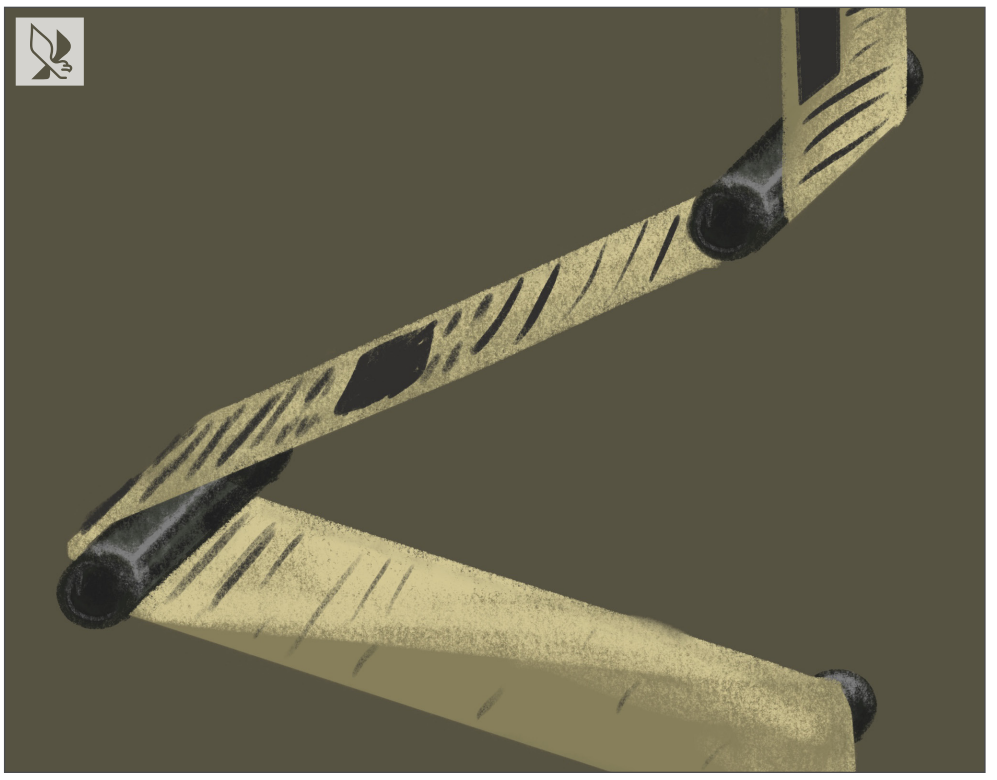


Illustration by Victoria Maldonado

This lack of staffing has put local newsrooms in a tight spot, with a heavy reliance on any type of funding they can secure. The stripping of financing from CPB not only means weaker public media but also results in journalists losing their jobs and an already struggling field being hurt even more.

Public media, such as NPR's branch in North Texas and KERA, provide education, news and stories at a local level that are essential to having a society that runs efficiently. Supporting these local newsrooms and broadcasts is becoming an increasingly daunting task.

Public pushback on these decisions is what will create change in Congress. Calling a Texas representative and urging support for public media is necessary, and engaging in conversations within communities is a significant stepping stone. Additionally, donating to a local broadcast station and providing financial support to local media helps these newsrooms stay afloat.

Creating a public media ecosystem that is not entirely reliant on corporate funding and can operate independently of outside influence is necessary to maintain a healthy democracy.

Large company data centers negatively impact Texas' small towns, risk urban takeover

By Robert Trevino
Staff Writer

The tech sector is targeting rural Texas as fertile ground for data centers, also known as software housing facilities, due to the increasing need for new locations to secure vast amounts of data.

Rural communities should not have to bear the brunt of the tech world's expansion, especially when it will drastically affect their way of life.

Whether the Hill Country or in the vast openness of West Texas, there is beauty to be found in rural areas. However, small localities are facing a looming threat of data centers being installed in their areas, which will upend their quiet country comfort.

Data centers are not uncommon in the state of Texas. Currently, there are 395 data centers in the state, but most are located in or connected to major metropolitan areas. However, corporations are now targeting rural areas for new centers because of lower property rates, more open space and local officials hoping to boost their economy.

According to a study conducted by the University of British Columbia and McGill University, rural communities are happy with their slower pace of life. They do not require the fast intensity of the city and, despite fewer job opportunities, are content with their small-town charm. So, adding the disruption of data centers to their communities would detract from their overall perception of its quality.

Many rural towns are agrarian, mainly relying on farming or ranching to make money. Often, farmers and ranchers have to lease the land they operate on because land prices are already too high. Expanding small towns to create the necessary infrastructure to support larger populations will increase property rates and limit the available land in rural communities for residents.

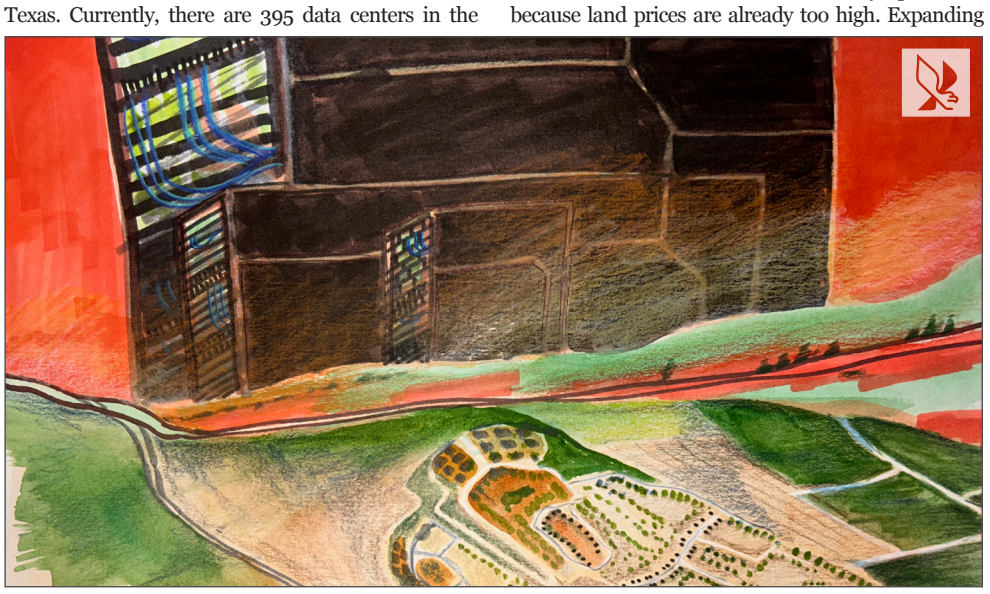


Illustration by Victoria Maldonado

Farmers also cannot plant the same type of crop on the same field year after year, and instead employ crop rotation, the need for which was exacerbated by the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. Farm land can become sterile with decreases in crop production, so farmers often lease different plots every season to maintain stable output.

Farmers already have to be diligent about the way they use their land, especially with data centers arriving and occupying farm land. Increasing tariffs and the high cost of production are causing farmers who are already struggling to make a living to have to consider more factors in their livelihood.

Texas operates independently of the United States on its own power grid, and an increase in data centers in the state will require a considerable amount of energy. It is already predicted that in 2025, these centers will use up to 10 percent of the state's power capacity. Adding these centers could cause congestion in power lines and lead to a price spike in Texans' electric bills, potentially triggering rolling blackouts.

To combat this, Texas lawmakers have attempted to incentivize the development of new natural gas facilities. However, despite the low-interest loans offered, these plants can take years to construct. Lawmakers have also suggested that companies building these centers should be forced to produce their own electricity on-site.

Google has attempted to build data centers that generate clean energy, but its plan has not yet come to fruition. One part of this is the different regulations that govern green energy and fossil fuels, but the other is Google's increasing need for more energy. The tech giant is now eyeing nuclear power, but that form of power generation has similar problems as natural gas facilities.

These data centers will also affect the water supply available to small towns, which may already be experiencing water insecurities. In Amarillo, Texas, where five new centers are planned, local citizens held a protest to limit their water usage and protect the Ogallala Aquifer, one of the town's primary sources of water.

Supporters, on the other hand, have claimed that the economic benefits will outweigh any potential drawbacks. Trent Sisemore, a former Amarillo mayor, said the centers will provide good jobs to the community and help bolster the rural Texas communities' economy.

The Amarillo community is in a region heavily affected by water shortages. A new data center being put 35 miles north of Amarillo is expected to use between 2.5 and 10 million gallons of water a day. Amarillo citizens use approximately 50 million gallons of water a day, so the center alone could consume up to one-fifth of the city's daily water usage.

Rural Texas could stand to experience the same transformation that occurred in the 19th century with the expansion of oil conglomerates. However, these towns can lose far more both environmentally and socially compared to the oil industry's largely positive financial impact on rural Texas.

If it is not possible to stop the expansion of data centers, then Texans should support legislation that further limits these centers from draining Texas of its resources and limits the number of data centers in rural communities. This would help prevent a mass takeover of farmland and the pollution of communities. If not, many of these communities could change or even disappear due to a lack of resources.

These communities risk losing their quaint charm that makes them special by being turned into cities that rely solely on jobs from data centers. The takeover or loss of these towns to data centers would be a big loss for Texas, farmers and those who enjoy nature or life away from the city.